



*Proposed Widening of U. S. 321
from U. S. 70 in Hickory
to Southwest Boulevard in Lenoir*

Public Hearings

Monday

July 11, 2016

Pre-Hearing Open House 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Formal Presentation 7:00 p.m.

Winkler Activity Center

2500 Clement Boulevard, Hickory

Tuesday

July 12, 2016

Pre-Hearing Open House 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Formal Presentation 7:00 p.m.

The Broyhill Center, Room 215

1913 Hickory Boulevard SE, Lenoir

*Connecting people, products and places safely and efficiently with customer focus, accountability
and environmental sensitivity to enhance the economy and vitality of North Carolina.*

PUBLIC HEARING PURPOSE

Today's public hearing is an important step in the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) process for making you, the public, a part of the project development process. The purpose of the public hearing is to present the U.S. 321 Widening Project to the public and to obtain your input to assist with selection of a preferred alternative.

YOUR PARTICIPATION

The intent of today's public hearing is to provide you with an opportunity to learn more about the proposed project and to voice your opinion on what you see today.

You may write your comments or questions on the comment sheet attached to this packet and leave it in the comment box located at the Comment Table, or mail it, by August 15, 2016, to the following address:

Ms. Diane Wilson
NCDOT – Human Environment Section
1598 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1598

Email: pdwilson1@ncdot.gov

Both evenings, all who would like to make an oral statement in a formal setting may do so. Please be sure to sign up at the Welcome table. Each individual will be allowed three minutes to make their statement. If you would like to speak for a longer time, you may speak for an additional three minutes after all others who wish to speak have had the opportunity to do so. The Formal portion of each night's Hearing will be recorded and a transcript prepared.

STATE FEDERAL RELATIONSHIP

This project is a Federal-Aid Highway Project and thus will be constructed under the State-Federal Aid Highway Program. Financing of this project will be 80% Federal funds and 20% State funds. The Board of Transportation is responsible for the selection and scheduling of projects on the Federal-Aid System including their location, design and maintenance cost after construction. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is responsible for the review and approval of the previously mentioned activities to ensure that each Federal-Aid Project is designed, constructed and maintained to Federal-Aid Standards.

DOES MY OPINION COUNT?

Everyone present is urged to participate in the proceedings. It is important, however, that **THE OPINIONS OF ALL INDIVIDUALS BE RESPECTED REGARDLESS OF HOW DIFFERENT THEY MAY BE FROM YOUR OWN.**

Debates are out of place at public hearings. Also, the public hearing is not to be used as a Popular Referendum to determine the location and/or design by a majority vote of those present.

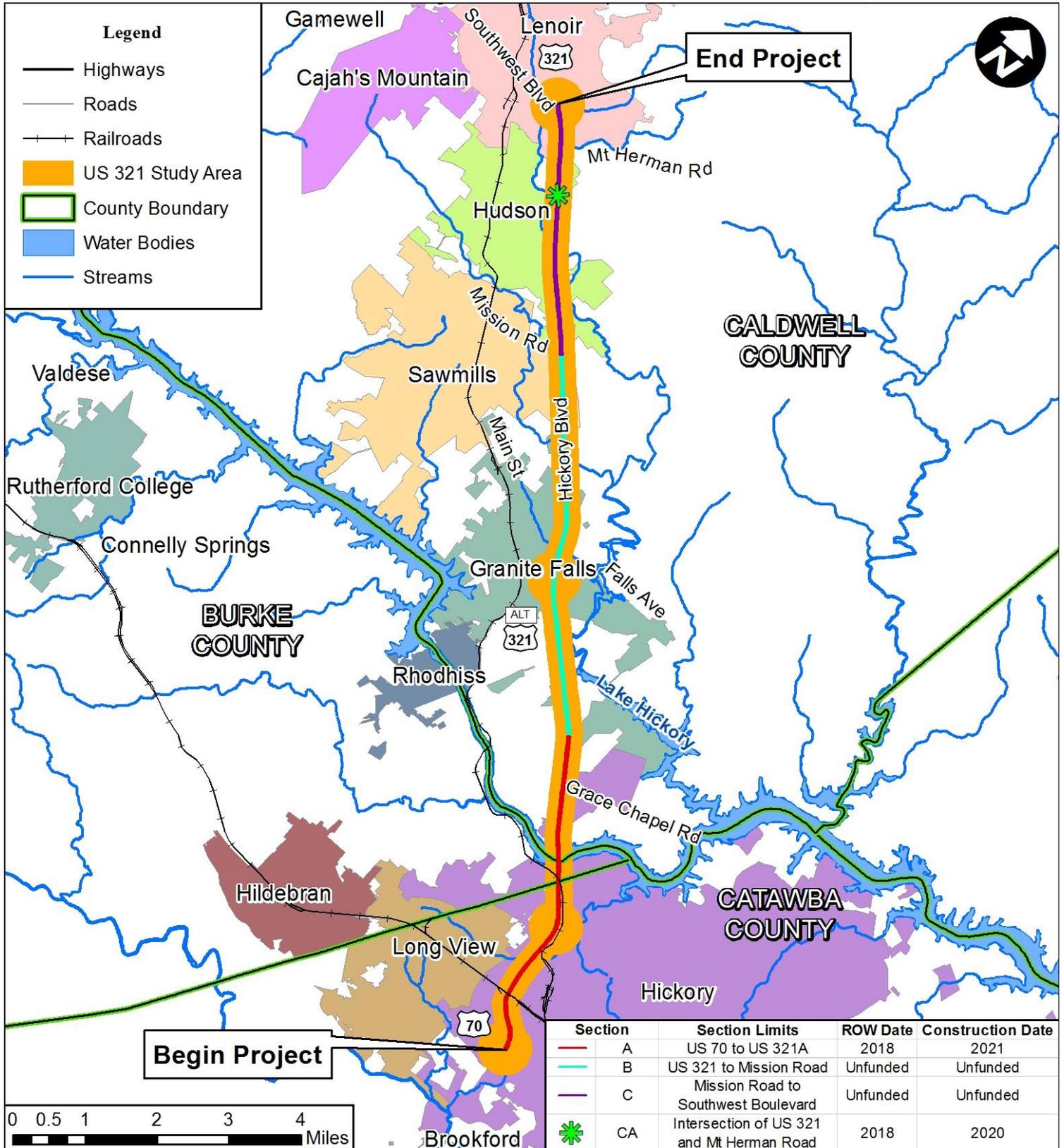
WHAT IS DONE WITH MY COMMENTS?

After the comment period ends on August 15, 2016, all comments will be reviewed and discussed at a post-hearing meeting. The meeting will include NCDOT project team members, including its planners, engineers, right-of-way agents, and other transportation-related professionals, as well as representatives of other agencies, such as the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and the NC Department of Environmental Quality.

Issues raised will be addressed at that time or during the development of the Preferred Alternative's final design. Minutes of the post-hearing meeting will be prepared and a summary will be available to the public. You may request this document on the attached comment sheet.

NCDOT considers safety, costs, traffic service, social impacts and public comments in making decisions.

PROJECT VICINITY



PROJECT HISTORY

The last public meetings on the project were conducted in 2008. Since that time, NCDOT has updated the traffic forecasts, completed research and supporting technical studies, and refined the design. The project team has met with local officials along the corridor several times. Members of state and federal agencies have worked together to determine the most appropriate design options for this corridor.

The original limits of the project were from U.S. 70 in Hickory to U.S. 64 in Lenoir. The northern end of the project was shortened from U.S. 64 to Southwest Boulevard in late 2015. This change will allow NCDOT and the City of Lenoir additional time to study alternatives at the U.S. 321 and U.S. 64/N.C. 18-90 intersection. This change reduced the length of the project by 3.3 miles.

The Environmental Assessment for Project U-4700 was completed in February 2016.

WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED?

NCDOT is proposing to widen U.S. 321 to a six lane median divided road.

Extending 13.9 miles, from just north of the U.S. 70 interchange in Hickory to Southwest Boulevard (S.R. 1933) in Lenoir, the project crosses through five municipalities (Hickory, Granite Falls, Sawmills, Hudson, and Lenoir) and three counties (Catawba, Caldwell, and Burke).

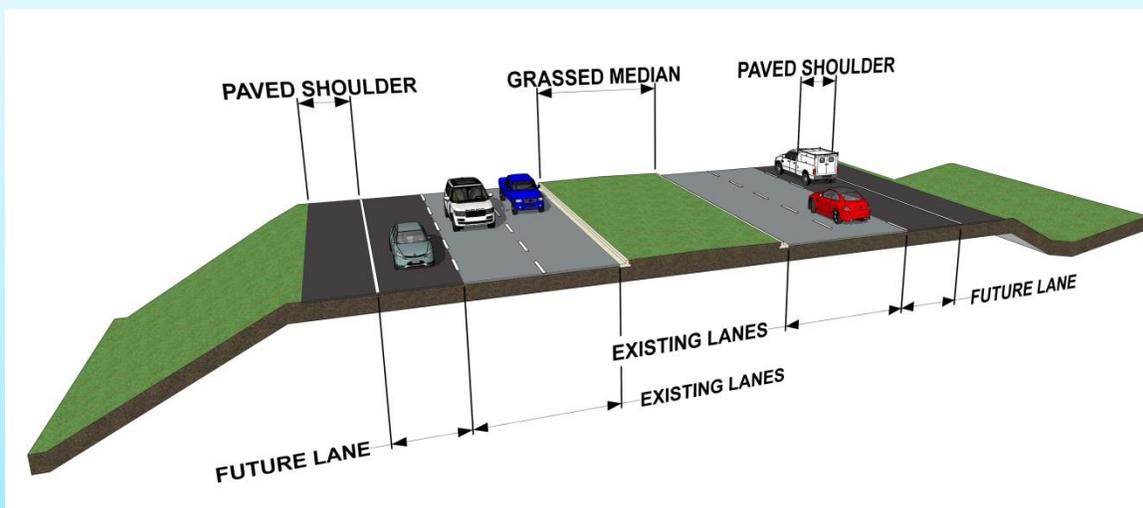
Locations for widening along U.S. 321 were evaluated to “best fit” the current road location and surrounding land uses.

The best fit widening alternative was designed to

- improve the existing roadway alignment,
- minimize impacts, and
- permit traffic to be maintained on U.S. 321 during construction

Although all alternatives considered six lanes, three different median widths were evaluated: 22-foot, 30-foot, or 46-foot. The current design primarily uses a 30-foot raised median, and contains a short segment with a 22-foot median on the south end, in Hickory.

The 30-foot median section is shown below.



PROJECT INFORMATION

The project is divided into the following segments in the NCDOT 2016-2025 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP):

Section A:	U.S. 70 in Hickory to U.S. 321A
Section B:	U.S. 321A to Mission Road
Section C:	Mission Road to Southwest Boulevard in Lenoir
Section CA:	Mount Herman Road intersection

DESIGN

U.S. 321 will be a Superstreet design

At a Superstreet intersection (also known as a Synchronized Street), side-street traffic is redirected, which reduces the risk of accidents from traffic traveling straight through or left at a divided highway.

All side-street and driveway traffic must turn right, but can then access a U-turn lane to proceed in the desired direction.

The Superstreet street concept works particularly well on heavily traveled routes.

NCDOT anticipates that this type of design for U.S. 321 will increase time savings for drivers along the corridor, improve safety, and decrease congestion.

New interchanges or interchange conversions are proposed at four locations:

- 13th Street SW
- Clement Boulevard/Old Lenoir Road
- Grace Chapel Road
Currently a traditional intersection, this may be changed to an interchange.
Three options (2 interchanges and 1 intersection) under consideration for this location are shown on the following pages.
- Falls Avenue
Currently an interchange, this may be changed to a Superstreet intersection.
Three interchange options under consideration for this location are shown on the following pages.

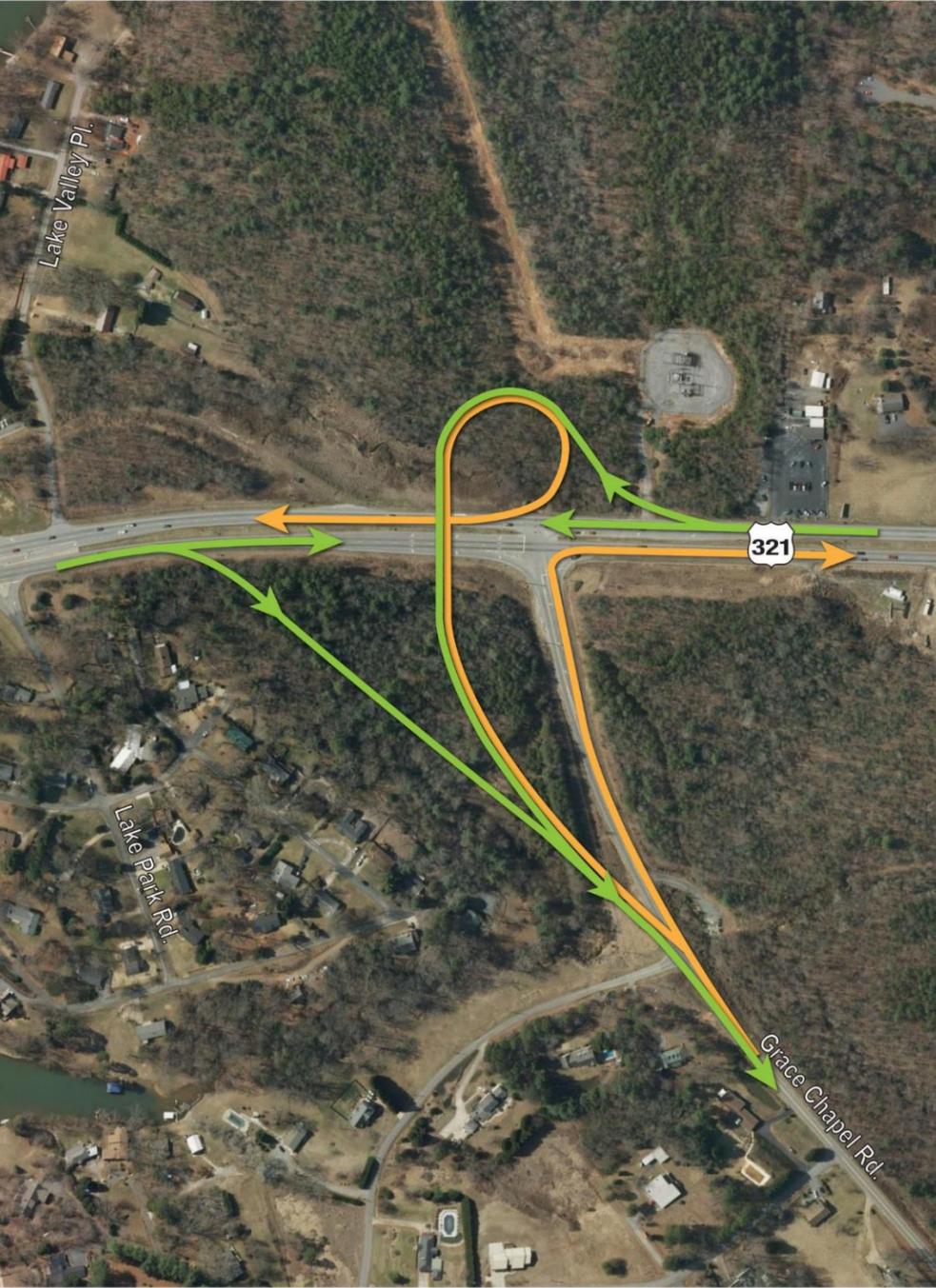
SUPERSTREETS

A Superstreet is a type of intersection in which side-street traffic is redirected from going straight through or left at a divided highway intersection. All side-street traffic must turn right, but can then access a U-turn to proceed in the desired direction.

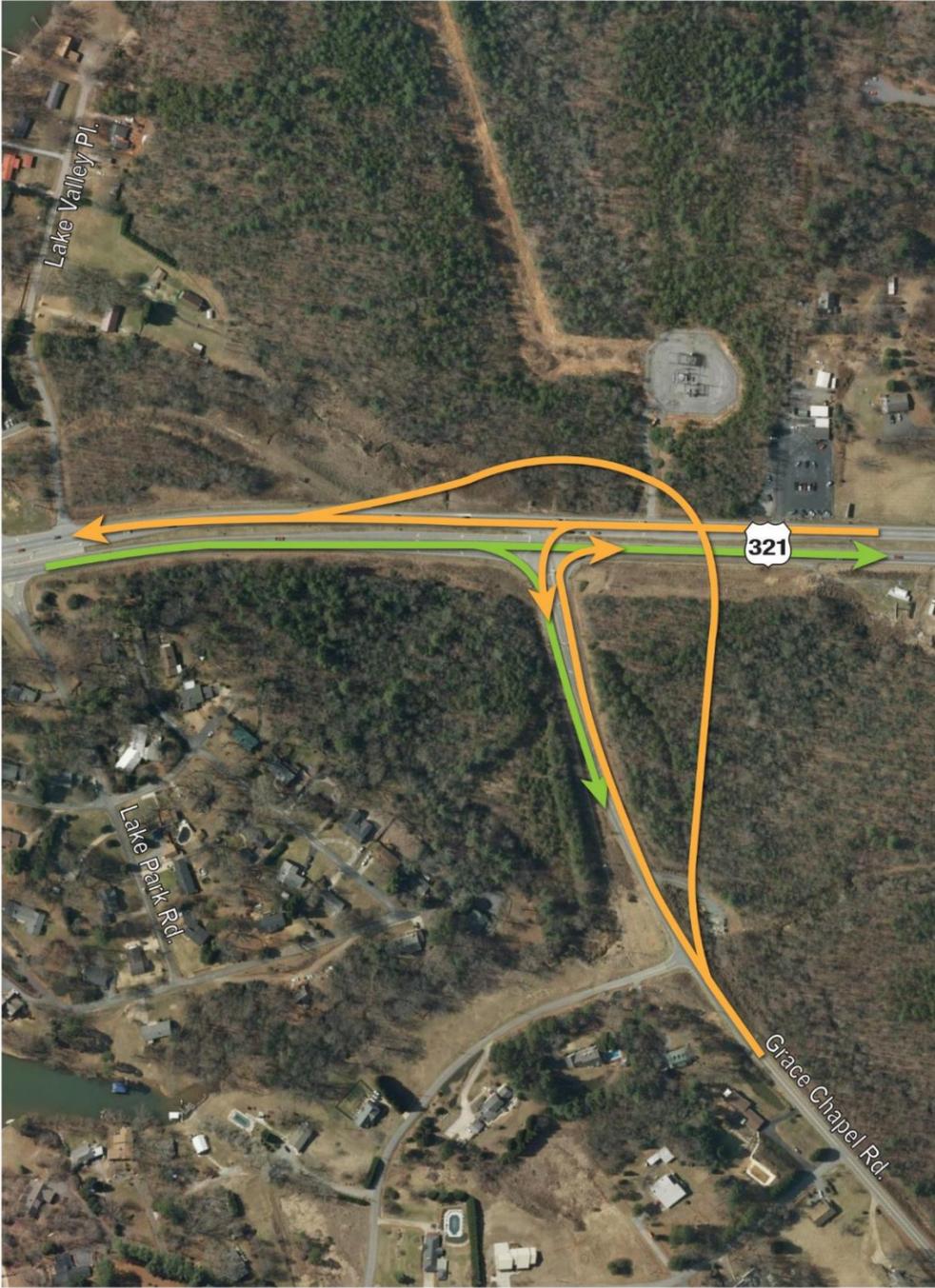
The Superstreet concept provides an effective alternative along heavily traveled regional arterials in areas with anticipated commercial and residential growth. The design concept is contingent upon a series of features that reduce potential conflict points while maintaining traffic flow. This results in:

- Increased safety due to reduced conflict points at major crossovers
- Time savings from simplified signal phasing
- Enhanced signal coordination
- Dedicated U-turn lanes for efficiency

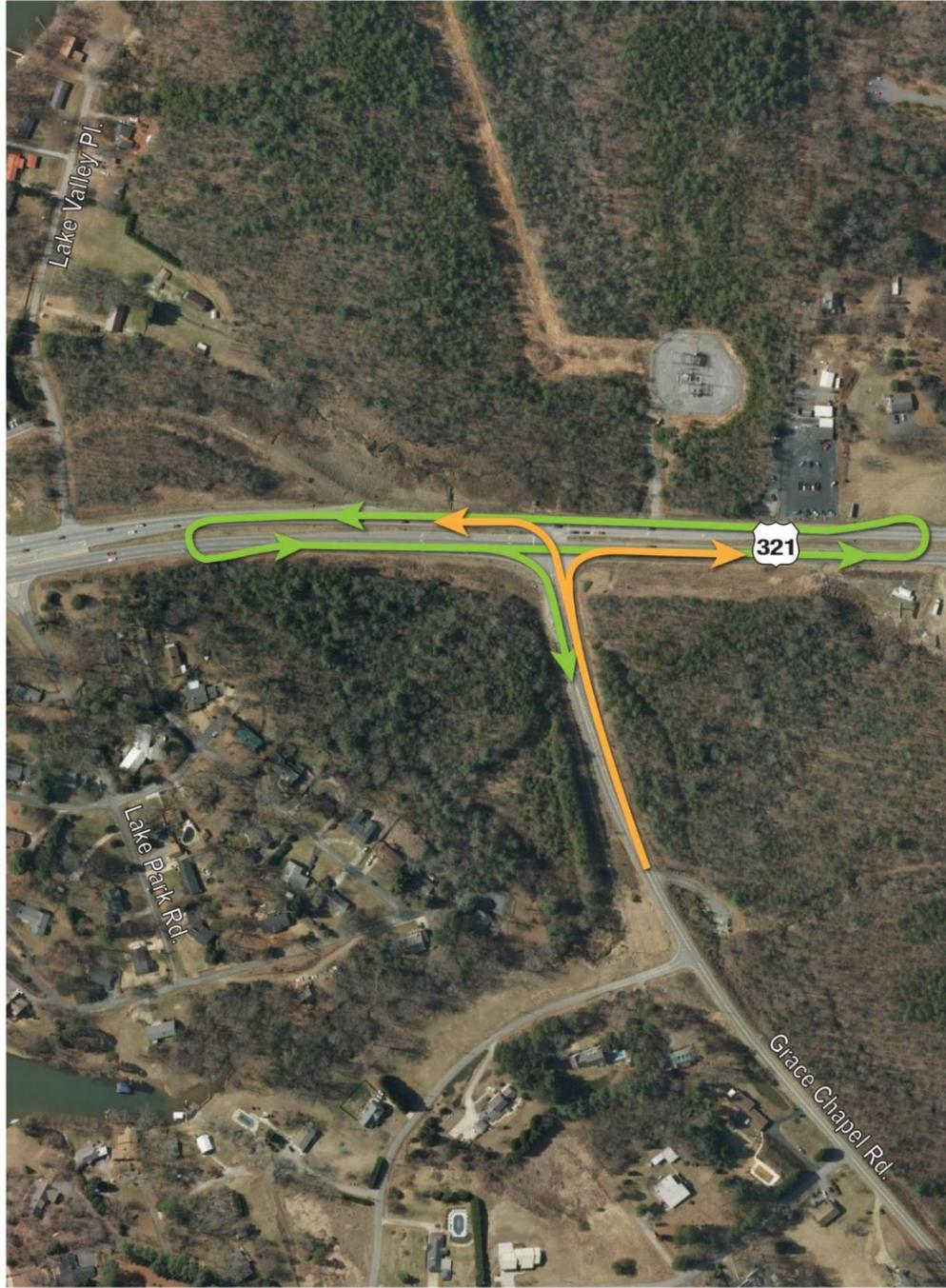
US 321/Grace Chapel Road Alternatives



A trumpet interchange



A flyover with an at-grade directional movement type intersection

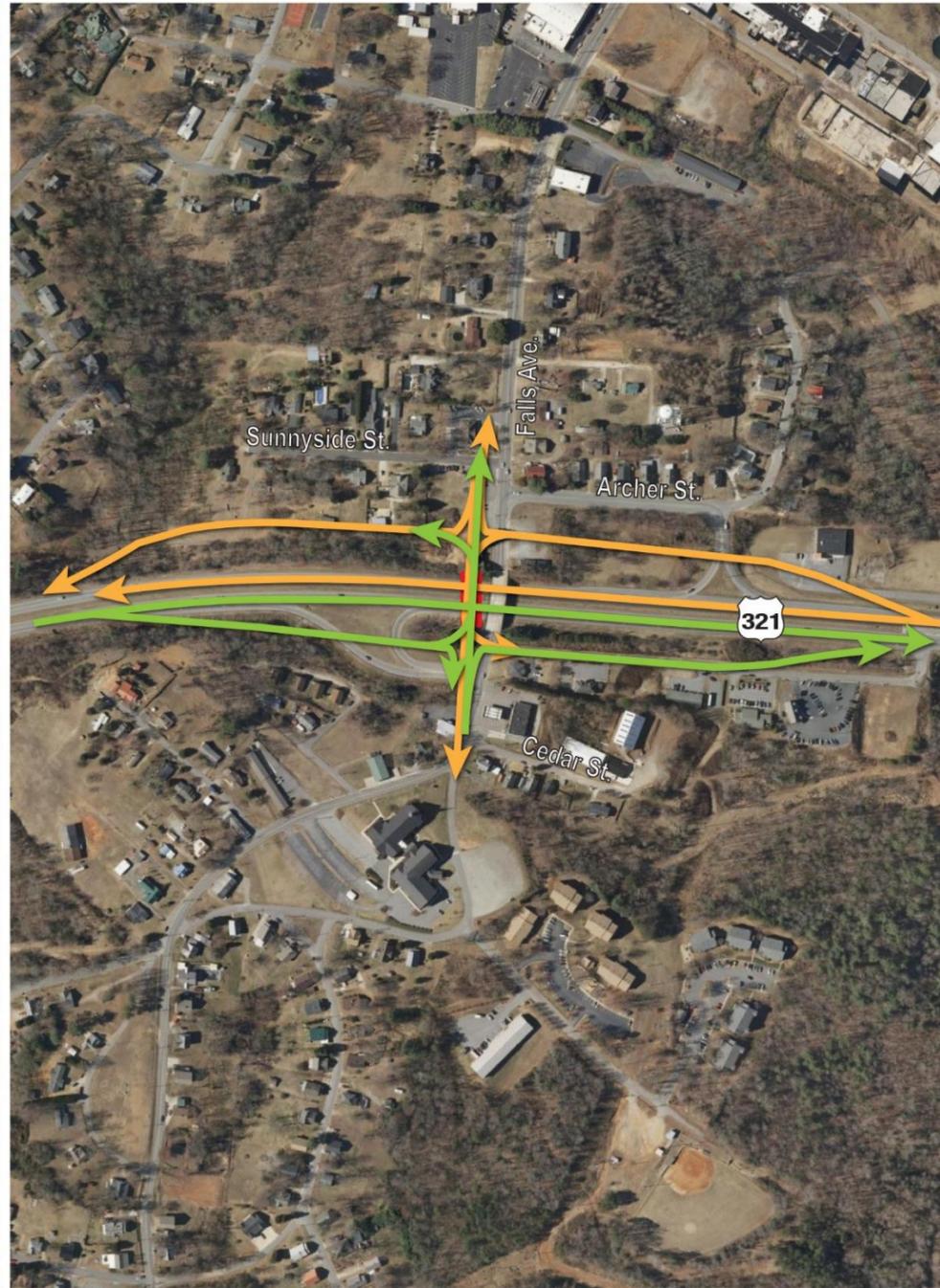


A signaled superstreet at-grade intersection

US 321/Falls Avenue Alternatives



A partial clover interchange



A tight diamond interchange



A superstreet type at-grade intersection

TABLE 1. ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS (IN MILLIONS)

	Section A		Section B		Section C
	U.S. 70 to Grace Chapel Road	U.S. 321/Grace Chapel Road Intersection	Grace Chapel Road to Falls Avenue and Falls Avenue to Mission Road	U.S. 321/Falls Avenue Interchange	Mission Road to Southwest Boulevard
Construction	\$104.8	Trumpet: \$13.9 Flyover: \$11.6 At Grade: \$5.7	\$39.2	Partial Clover: \$18.4 Tight Diamond: \$18.3 At Grade: \$13.8	\$11.8
Utility Relocation	\$1.9	Trumpet: \$0.6 Flyover: \$0.5 At Grade: \$0	\$3.2	Partial Clover: \$0.5 Tight Diamond: \$0.6 At Grade: \$0.4	\$1.8
Right of Way	\$39.0	Trumpet: \$5.2 Flyover: \$4.0 At Grade: \$3.1	\$31.0	Partial Clover: \$7.6 Tight Diamond: \$6.6 At Grade: \$5.0	\$9.4
Total	\$145.7	Trumpet: \$19.7 Flyover: \$16.1 At Grade: \$8.8	\$73.4	Partial Clover: \$26.5 Tight Diamond: \$25.5 At Grade: \$19.2	\$23.0

TABLE 2. PROJECT IMPACTS

	Section A		Section B		Section C
	U.S. 70 to Grace Chapel Road	U.S. 321/Grace Chapel Road Intersection	Grace Chapel Road to Falls Avenue / Falls Avenue to Mission Road	U.S. 321/Falls Avenue Interchange	Mission Road to Southwest Boulevard
Project Length (mi)	2.9	0.6	3.1 / 3.3	0.7	3.3
Relocations	56	Trumpet: 9 Flyover: 5 At Grade: 6	8 / 9	Partial Clover: 40 Tight Diamond: 23 At Grade: 21	8
Residential	13	Trumpet: 4 Flyover: 2 At Grade: 3	3 / 3	Partial Clover: 33 Tight Diamond: 13 At Grade: 14	0
Business	43	Trumpet: 5 Flyover: 3 At Grade: 3	5 / 6	Partial Clover: 7 Tight Diamond: 10 At Grade: 7	8
Historic Resources	No Effect or No Adverse Effect with conditions				
Wetlands (acres)	0.1	0	0 / 0.2	0	0.3
Streams (feet)	5,097	1,921	2,311 / 5,886	7,820	1,197

WHY BUILD THIS PROJECT?

Along U.S. 321 between Hickory and Lenoir, several roadway segments and a majority of intersections are currently experiencing congestion, and travel demands are not being satisfied. These conditions are anticipated to worsen as traffic volumes increase in the next 20 years.

The purpose of this project is to reduce existing and future congestion on U.S. 321.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

NCDOT will meet with representatives from the Federal Highway Administration and environmental resource and regulatory agencies such as the US Army Corps of Engineers, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the NC Wildlife Resource Commission, and the State Historic Preservation Office. Together, these agencies will choose a preferred alternative to carry forward into final design.

The final environmental document, anticipated to be a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), will be prepared. The FONSI will document the impacts and costs of the preferred alternative.

The FONSI will be circulated for public and federal and state agency review.

Final designs will be prepared, and the project will then proceed to the right of way acquisition phase of the project.

CURRENT SCHEDULE

October 2016	Selection of preferred alternative
Winter 2016/2017	Final environmental document (anticipated to be a FONSI)
Spring 2018	Final design
Right of way acquisition	- Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 for Sections A and CA - No funding for Sections B and C
Construction	- FY 2020 for Section CA (Mount Hermon Road) - FY 2021 for Section A (U.S. 70 in Hickory to U.S. 321A) No funding for Sections B and C (U.S. 321A to Mission Road and Mission Road to Southwest Boulevard in Lenoir)

Note: Many factors affect the project schedule, which is tentative and subject to change.

TITLE VI PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FORM

Completing this form is completely voluntary. You are not required to provide the information requested in order to participate in this meeting.

Meeting Type: Public Hearing Location: Hickory and Lenoir	Date: July 11 and 12, 2016
TIP No.: U-4700 Project Description: Proposed Widening of U.S. 321 from U.S. 70 in Hickory to Southwest Boulevard in Lenoir	

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related authorities, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) assures that no person(s) shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any of the Department's programs, policies, or activities, based on their race, color, national origin, disability, age, income, or gender.

Completing this form helps meet our data collection and public involvement obligations under Title VI and NEPA, and will improve how we serve the public. Please place the completed form in the designated box on the sign-in table, hand it to an NCDOT official or mail it to the PDEA-Human Environment Section, 1598 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1598.

All forms will remain on file at the NCDOT as part of the public record.

Zip Code: _____	Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Street Name: (i.e. Main Street) _____	Age: <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 18 <input type="checkbox"/> 45-64 <input type="checkbox"/> 18-29 <input type="checkbox"/> 65 and older <input type="checkbox"/> 30-44
Total Household Income: <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$12,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$47,000 – \$69,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$12,000 – \$19,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$70,000 – \$93,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 – \$30,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$94,000 – \$117,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$31,000 – \$46,999 <input type="checkbox"/> \$118,000 or greater	Have a Disability: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Race/Ethnicity: <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaskan Native <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____	National Origin: (if born outside the U.S.) <input type="checkbox"/> Mexican <input type="checkbox"/> Central American: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> South American: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Puerto Rican <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese <input type="checkbox"/> Korean <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____

How did you hear about this meeting? (newspaper advertisement, flyer, and/or mailing) _____

For more information regarding Title VI or this request, please contact the NCDOT Title VI Section at (919) 508-1830 or toll free at 1-800-522-0453, or by email at mlwright4@ncdot.gov

Thank you for your participation!



**Attn: Diane Wilson
NCDOT - PDEA
Human Environment Section
1598 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1598**



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